

THE CATHOLIC MIND

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JULY 8, 1939

No. 877

LOURDES

How Can it be Explained?

REGINALD J. DINGLE

EXTREME UNCTION

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CLEMENT J. HANDRON, M.D.

AMERICANISM

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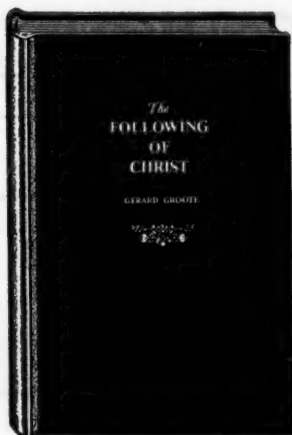
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THE CATHOLIC MIND

VOL. XXXVII

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Lourdes and Psychotherapy

REGINALD J. DINGLE

Reprinted from the Month (London).

NO Catholic who has ever caught the spirit of that remarkable place (Lourdes) can be in any danger of failing to put first things first, but to those who know Lourdes only through the literature, as I did myself until some years ago, I think there is always some risk of a false proportion. It may come to be regarded as a place to which Catholics go to be cured, so that the Faith, under this aspect, approximates to "Christian Science," although the devotional atmosphere is so unescapable that to some extent well-meaning enthusiasts have presented Lourdes in a less favorable aspect than the curious cult invented or appropriated by Mrs. Eddy. I believe it to be important, if Our Lady of Lourdes is to deliver her message to the modern world, that we should avoid a confusion of dissimilar things. In dealing with the devotional aspect let us do our feeble best to utter the unutterable, or abandon the attempt. If, however, we wish to discuss the miracles of Lourdes as illustrations of the pronouncements of the Vatican Council that miracles, which can be certainly known to be such, may be cited

as proofs of the divine origin of the Christian religion, we must be rigorously scientific. A description of a cure at Lourdes should be made with the same precision as an account would have—or perhaps it would be safer to say should have—in the *British Medical Journal* or *The Lancet*.

Non-Catholic sentimentalists have done a great disservice to this aspect of modern Catholicism. Some time after my first visit to Lourdes I read an article by a lady in the *Hibbert Journal* in which she declared lyrically that Lourdes is a place in which in an age of reason people go triumphantly to deny reason, or words to that effect. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. Lourdes is a temple of Reason; it demands the abandonment, as I shall try to show, of an irrational but firmly held dogma, expressed by Matthew Arnold in the well-known declaration: "Miracles do not happen." I am unable to understand the disinclination of some devout Catholics to apply the most rigorously critical and scientific methods to the cures at Lourdes. They seem to have an idea that it is dishonoring to Our Lady. Surely, if we accept the idea which permeates the New Testament and is crystallized in the anathemas of the Vatican Council that "works" are intended to be evidences of the Faith, those works must be intended to move the mind, and the mind, not of the righteous, but of sinners and sceptics.

The average Englishman believes that whereas the Catholic approaches the evidence at Lourdes with prepossessions, he himself does so with an open mind. The fact is, or may be, precisely the reverse. My Faith does not require me to reach any particular conclusion about the nature of any cure at Lourdes. I may hold that it is due to suggestion, to hydrotherapy, or to unknown natural forces. This last suggestion may appear questionable to some readers, but I know of nothing in Catholic doctrine which requires me to believe that our knowledge of natural agencies is com-

plete or to declare that a cure for which medical science at present can find no explanation is necessarily miraculous. Anyone who discusses the medical evidence from Lourdes with a Modernist will find him again and again taking refuge in this plea of "unknown natural forces." It would be an affectation on the part of anyone living in contemporary Europe and compelled to breathe the intellectual atmosphere of our time to profess any surprise at this. Admittedly it is a gratuitous assumption, but it is inevitable if you start with the dogma that "miracles do not happen." A *soi-disant* rationalist will tell you that, when a Catholic studies biology or any other science, he is limited by the fact that however objective his laboratory work may be, there are certain beliefs which he is bound to accept, and, if the facts contradict them, *tant pis pour les faits*. The difficulty is imaginary because nobody has yet shown any defined dogma which contradicts laboratory findings, but the point I wish to make is that the disability which is here supposed to affect the Catholic does actually exist in the case of the modernist investigating the facts of Lourdes. Give me a hundred cures and, after weighing the evidence, I am entitled to declare in favor of the purely natural character of every one of them without detriment to my orthodoxy. The "rationalist" dare not find for miracle in a single case. "Miracles do not happen." Let us have no mistake at the outset as to who is the dogmatist and who the free inquirer in this matter.

We have to abandon the attempt to argue with the critic who takes refuge in "unknown natural forces," because in this matter we are freethinkers and he is a dogmatist. A Catholic may argue in favor of the existence of God, because that may be proved by reason. If he be asked to demonstrate the existence of the Holy Trinity he must decline, because this is outside the sphere in which reason holds sway. And so it is with the modernist who pleads "unknown natural forces."

He cannot pretend that this is in any way a scientific proceeding; it is a necessity of his dogmatic attitude. The difference is that he is an unconscious dogmatist and his naive professions of complete freedom remind one of the antics of a hypnotized subject—which, as a matter of fact, is precisely what he is. He is hypnotized by the *Zeitgeist*.

There is, however, a type of critic with whom it should be possible to hold a rigorously scientific discussion and he is very much in evidence in these days. I mean the one who appeals to psychotherapy to explain the cures. It cannot be questioned that one of the outstanding developments of modern medical thought has been the increased importance given to psychic factors in the aetiology and treatment of illness. A great many conditions are now admitted to be of psychogenic origin for which nineteenth-century doctors would have been almost unanimous in postulating some organic cause. It is equally admitted that mental treatment succeeds in many cases in which physical methods fail. So far we are agreed, and it is always licit and very wise to investigate the possibility that any case of cure in which known physical remedial agents have not been employed may be a case of psychotherapy. It is a normal and very important branch of modern medical science. Unfortunately, there is a tendency among those who know nothing of the subject to write and talk as though psychotherapeutics were not a science at all, but a pure mystery, and a convenient receptacle for any facts that are not to be explained in other ways. This is very unfair to a body of able and patient workers in the field of psychological medicine.

What have the various schools of psychotherapy to tell us about the influence of mind over body? They do not all say the same thing but, as any student of the subject will know, there is a very considerable area of agreement and, as is always the case when we are deal-

ing with genuine experimentalists, the differences are not so much about the facts as about the interpretation of them. Let us consider the main findings of modern psychotherapy and see how far they apply to what happens at Lourdes.

It will be fair to say that the central concept of modern medical psychology is that of "the unconscious" and its influence on conscious activities. It aims at influencing conscious life through the unconscious. This may be done by the method of avowed suggestion either "hetero" or "auto." The best-known modern exponent of this method is Baudouin, of whom the late lamented Emile Coué was the charming and enthusiastic apostle. According to the various schools of analytical psychology, treatment should consist not of suggestions by the conscious mind to the unconscious, but of a resolution of the conflicts which exist in the latter.

The distinctive teaching of Baudouin is that of the importance of the imagination. In a contest between the will and the imagination, he tells us, the imagination always wins. Immediately the conscious mind says: "I will to do, or to be, so and so," the imagination is liable to add: "But I cannot." Therefore, the method of the suggestionist is not to say: "I will be well" or "I ought to be well," but "I am well." In the words of the Prophet Joel: "Let the weak say: I *am* strong" (iii, 10). The system that will immediately suggest itself to the reader in this connection is the modern American heresy, quaintly described as "Christian Science." There can be no need, in addressing educated Catholics, to waste any time on the philosophical absurdities of this cult, but it is worth while to examine the subject objectively, because there appears to be reliable evidence that among those who adopt this system there are cures of disease by purely mental methods. Now the central idea of "Christian Science" in this connection is that disease does not exist except as "an illusion of mortal mind." The sufferer is not ill;

he believes he is. When he has rid himself of this illusion the cure is effected. On Mrs. Eddy's hypothesis, failure is simply an inability to see the truth. To those who reject that hypothesis—including, obviously, all philosophical realists, the whole of the medical profession and most people who have ever had toothache—the cure has to be explained in another way. We may say that while it is not true that disease is unreal, it may be true that the malady of any particular person has its origin in the imagination and may find its cure in the same quarter. That would be a perfectly orthodox answer from the point of view of a suggestionist. Alternatively, we may say that, although the patient was ill, the powerful imaginative suggestion of a state of health has been sufficient to substitute that condition for the preceding one of illness. What is clear is that an essential feature of any cure which is to be compared with those recorded in the literature of "Christian Science" is a denial of illness.

But this is precisely the opposite of what happens at Lourdes. Those who have assisted at the Benediction of the Sick will know with what emphasis in all languages the priests declare: "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Not for a moment is the pilgrim allowed to deceive himself into the belief that he is well, that his malady is a delusion. The Christian Scientist must renounce the "materialist science" of the medical profession, but the pilgrim to "Lourdes is encouraged to have the most precise definition of his malady by the physician before he sets out. To imagine a medical bureau in a "Christian Science" center is to perceive at once the incompatibility of the two things we are discussing. However we are to explain Lourdes it cannot be brought under the same rubric as "Christian Science."

Nevertheless, it may be urged that the records of this sect do not exhaust the possibilities of suggestion. What have the accredited medical representatives of

suggestion-therapy to say? As far as my fairly extensive reading on this subject goes there is general agreement on one or two essential points. Whether suggestion be applied under hypnosis or in the waking state, the necessary conditions are suggestibility and "mono-idealism." Since the early work of Braid and others, the condition of suggestibility has been recognized to be more widely diffused than was originally believed. Most people may be considered suggestible in the right conditions. When these have been created, the endeavor of the practitioner—whether the patient himself or another—is to secure that the mind is occupied by one idea to the exclusion of all others. The art of suggestion is defined by one writer in these terms:

The introduction into the mind of another, or of oneself, of representations which will evoke or formulas which will express the effect desired, to maintain them long enough and often enough to make them predominant and determinant.¹

It is obvious, and all writers insist upon it, that the suggestions must be delivered with a calm confidence. Nothing could be more fatal to success than hesitation, as expressed by the conditional mood. As far as I know, this is not challenged by any writer on the subject. Now if the procedure at Lourdes is to be considered as suggestion-therapy it is extremely incompetent. It is, to employ a Gallicism, entirely under the sign of the conditional. "Lord, *if* thou wilt, Thou canst heal me." Not for one moment is the pilgrim encouraged to believe either that he is not ill, or that he may expect to be well. He knows that among the thousands who go to Lourdes cure is not the rule, but the exception. He is imploring a favor and is encouraged to reconcile himself to its refusal. Let us put the cures of suggestion-therapy at their highest and we shall find no real comparison possible with the cures attested by reliable non-Catholic medical witnesses as having

¹ *Méthode Pratique d'Auto-suggestion*, by C.-J. Jagot (Paris), p. 13.

happened at Lourdes, for the instantaneous cure of organic diseases is not claimed by any reputable psychotherapist. No doctor claims to cure by suggestion physical deformities in children who have not reached the age of reason. Suggestion does not operate upon those who are entirely sceptical of its efficacy. On all these points the evidence at Lourdes, which may be studied by anyone who is interested, defies explanation by suggestion. But setting all that aside and admitting the presence among those who visit the shrine of many who are suitable for suggestion treatment, is there any practitioner of the art who would conduct his clinic on the lines of Lourdes?

Dr. Ivo Geikie Cobb, neurologist to the Ministry of Pensions, in his *Manual of Neurasthenia* (London, 1920), has some curious remarks on this subject. He is discussing a tendency to attribute cures of neurasthenia to underlying suggestion even where physical agents have been employed, such as hydrotherapy, electricity, massage, rest, etc., and he says:

But, as in cases quoted at Lourdes, it can equally truthfully be argued here that the patients are unbelievers and sceptics; and even if the suggestion is unconscious and it is further averred that its *absence* cannot be proven, the only answer is obvious—namely, that suggestion, when unconsciously given has, *on these arguments*, more cures to its credit than when intentionally and carefully administered, for many successes follow these physical methods and psychotherapy has its due proportion of failures.²

It seems clear that this distinguished non-Catholic neurologist is not prepared to attribute even the cures of neurasthenics at Lourdes to suggestion and, since the examination of the water and other tests exclude any of the physical agencies mentioned, it would be interesting to know to what he does attribute them.

Any approach to the phenomena of Lourdes from the angle of medical psychology should begin, not with the cures, but with the visions of Bernadette, for these

² *Méthode Pratique*, p. 4. (Italics in the original.)

can be attributed to insanity or hysteria as easily as the cures can be set down to suggestion. The three doctors who examined the Saint in no friendly spirit, were quite unable to find that she was mentally deranged. Moreover, they could not bring the visions within any known category of hysterical hallucination. This was confessed by one of them, Dr. Balencie, in 1878, when he was compelled to abandon his earlier sceptical attitude. It is an interesting example of the way in which dogmatic incredulity can distort the scientific judgment that these doctors should have advanced the suggestion that the visions had their origin in a sudden light seen in the grotto. Nothing could have been easier than for the doctors to test this hypothesis. They would have learned, from the position of the grotto and the testimony of the large number of witnesses, that it was untenable. We are faced here with precisely the same unscientific attitude as that which led Dr. J. B. S. Haldane to declare: "Diseases of the nervous system and chronic diseases of the skin are particularly amenable to cure by suggestion and other psychological methods. Jesus's recorded healing work was mainly confined to these complaints."³ There is no foundation for any of these assertions except the fact that Dr. Haldane cannot admit miracles.

But purely subjective visions, whether we call them hysterical or anything else, are restricted to the *psyche* of the patient. They do not give information about objective facts if we exclude such as being known to other persons may be conveyed by telepathy. In this case, Bernadette was told to drink of the water where there was no water apparent. She set out for the river Gave and was recalled. She then scraped the ground and drank from a stream of which the existence was entirely unsuspected by anyone. These facts are unchallenged and the honesty of Bernadette has been conceded by everyone, medical and non-medical, who ever

³ *Possible Worlds* (London, 1930), p. 219.

saw her. Was the discovery of this stream which now supplies the nine *piscinas* and issues day and night from fifteen taps, a pure coincidence? A great deal of credulity goes to the making of a sceptic!

Suggestion can only be invoked by those who have never studied the subject. There is no example of a medical man conversant with the findings and methods of psychotherapy who has examined the phenomena of Lourdes as carefully as he would examine any other clinical data and pretended that psychotherapy can explain them. Yet it is admitted that the medical staff at the Bureau place every facility at the disposal of investigators without regard to their religious or irreligious views.

What of the newer branches of medical psychology, the systems of Freud, Jung, and Adler? Do they throw any light on Lourdes? Certainly nobody will claim that any system of psychoanalysis is practised there. It must be admitted in fairness to Freud that his claims in the realm of therapeutics are very modest. He professes to have an explanation of our mental life, but in relation to many psychotic and neurotic conditions he does not attempt to conceal his helplessness. If we are to summarize the Freudian teaching without unfairness, we may say that the essence of the cure consists in bringing to consciousness conflicts which were buried and thus resolving them. Nothing of the kind happens at Lourdes. Moreover, the psychoanalysts would admit readily that organic diseases of the kind to be found in the records are outside the scope of their treatment. If we are to find in Catholicism any resemblances to psychoanalysis it is clearly in the confessional that we must look for it. The differences are more important than the similarities but the comparison is not pointless. "The first beginnings of all analytical treatment," says Jung, "are in the confessional."⁴ In describing his experiences with Catholics and Prot-

⁴ *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London, 1934), p. 35.

estants in Switzerland he concedes a value to the practice of confession in maintaining mental health and there is no need to dispute this. We do not find, however, that the Sacrament of Penance has any of the results which occur at Lourdes.

The fact is that this hazy idea that in some way the miracles of Lourdes can now be subsumed under psychotherapy finds no support whatever from those who have studied the subject. It is an amateur's theory advanced to escape the necessity of admitting the miraculous.

The Physician and Extreme Unction

CLEMENT J. HANDRON, M.D.

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THERE is so much of the beautiful in all the ceremonies of the Catholic Church that to isolate the Sacrament of Extreme Unction for a particular discussion of its beauty would seem rather jejune. When to beauty, however, are added power and significance of purpose, the subject develops an aura of higher dignity. And when to the marks of beauty, power, and significance there is added the fact that the physician, unlike the layman, is almost daily in contact with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the importance of a discussion of that Sacrament, especially as it is related to the activities of the physician, may be readily comprehensible. Second only perhaps to his personal attendance upon his own religious duties is the doctor's duty in time of serious illness to advise the reception of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Instituted by Christ to be administered in impending death, it is a part of the last Benediction that man

may receive before mortal dissolution speeds the flight of the soul. Received in sequence to the Sacrament of Penance and to Holy Viaticum and preceding the final Papal Benediction it prepares the spirit for the promised Beatific Vision. In the light of the purpose of its existence this Sacrament assumes a major role in the daily routine of the physician's practice.

Man is a being in whom the two elements of which he is composed—body and soul—are interactive. There is no question but that the emotions of worry, fear, remorse and despair, all experienced by the troubled soul, have definite deleterious effects on the body. Similarly a diseased body, broken and rendered useless, stimulates a hitherto lethargic mind to contemplate the soul and its destiny.

Mens sana in corpore sano, fortem posce animum, mortis terrore carentem—a sound mind in a sound body and a brave spirit troubled not by the terrors of death. Preachers, writers, statesmen, all have often quoted the first portion of the above. Less well remembered and less frequently used is the latter half. A sound mind contributes to the enduring soundness, functionally speaking, of the body. No less realistically does a clean soul (*animus*) contribute to a terrorless death. In this respect alone the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is unexcelled in significance. It is the only justifiable form of euthanasia available to the Catholic physician. And how significant it is! Practiced as the doctor is in the interpretation of facial expression and accurate in diagnosing "the native act and figure of the heart in complement extern" from the coordinated action of facial muscles, it is he who would be first to affirm the unaffected expression of faith on the face of the sick man who has just received the Last Sacrament—an expression of faith vastly superior in its marks of beauty to any observed during the course of untroubled life.

In addition to the actual spiritual power of Extreme

Unction there are other perfectly tangible results to be noted during and following its administration. These results are likely to be more clearly apparent to the physician and the priest than to the patient or his kin. Reference is here specifically made to the psychologic reaction of the persons at the immediate bedside. How often has it been noted that the atmosphere of the sick room, seemingly heavy with doubt and uncertainty, suddenly becomes clear and light following the reception of the Last Sacrament by the patient. The change is noted by all and to each there may come the impression that the end is not yet, that there is still some hope! Although reason may dictate that there has been no material change, yet change of some sort there certainly has been. That change is undoubtedly due to the relief of nerve-muscle tension when the individual emotions of fear and doubt are replaced by confidence and by the conscious satisfaction of something accomplished. The patient becomes less fretful and more at ease. His attitude is more cheerful. He is always relieved in mind and seemingly on not too infrequent occasions in body; for it is common to find that reception of Extreme Unction appears to relieve pain. The patient is buoyed by two separate hopes. If he is not to die, the Sacrament just received will speed his recovery; and if death is inevitable, he will pass on with a sense of security for the future. In either case, he exemplifies the last half of the quotation—*fortem posce animum, mortis terrore carentem*.

The patient's relatives console themselves with the thought that their dear one has not gone to his Creator "unanointed and unanealed." They have consummated a duty not only to their relative but also to their religion and their God. They have also very effectively avoided the probable qualms of conscience that would have come should they have been neglectful of the step taken. They are likely to experience, too, a marked sense of relief from another point of view. An other-

wise intelligent and mature individual will often exhibit a morbid and stupid type of solicitude for a patient. It is based upon the actually non-existent terror with which a sick person is supposed to become possessed at the mere mention of the Last Sacrament. The possibility of this attitude being found in the sick room is always present. A perfectly splendid but highly emotional husband or wife, brother or sister will at times almost harshly turn aside the doctor's suggestion of Extreme Unction on the entirely false premise that the very sight of the priest with the Holy Oils is sufficient cause for a grave relapse, an emotional storm bordering on hysteria or even sudden death from shock. For this reason, with strong emotion clouding reason and judgment, Extreme Unction is all too often unreasonably delayed. Only after insistence by the physician has broken down prejudice, do these well-intentioned relatives allow the priest to administer the Sacrament; and only after the threatened storm fails to materialize do they realize with wonder and awe that they could have been mistaken. Then and only then do they experience the relief of mind that should have been theirs at the first suggestion of the Last Sacrament. As a matter of personal experience the author has yet to see a patient unduly upset by either the pre-announced or the unheralded entrance of the priest into the sick room for the purpose of ministering to the ill.

It should be recalled by medical men both as doctors and as possible patients, that Extreme Unction should be received while the subject is conscious and fully aware of what is taking place.

Extreme Unction has an effect on every person present at its administration and in no little measure on the doctor. The patient may assume one of two attitudes: he may exhibit a heretofore unexpected strength of will to live. This is of extreme importance, especially in the acute fulminating types of illnesses;

or he may more peacefully resign himself to the unswerving course of approaching death. In either instance, he becomes a lesser trial to an already sorely tried doctor. The will to live in the face of impending disaster means that the physician is assured of the fullest cooperation that his patient's intellect, will and physical strength are capable of giving. Every doctor fully realizes the great powers of these three forces of resistance and assistance. Would that the physician always might have all of those factors assisting him! In the other instance the patient conveys by his attitude the impression that the doctor has done his best in a positive manner, has left nothing undone the doing of which might have altered the end result, and having approached the apex of his human limitations must of necessity resign his will with that of doctor to the Will which allows them both to live and die to live again. Truly may it be said that the physician has a constant ally in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Having so often viewed with interest the various difficult situations encountered in the giving of the Last Sacrament, the physician is qualified to make some observations on the several mental and emotional attitudes manifested by those in attendance. The first question one might ask is: What is the predominating note in the attitude of the patient toward his reception of the Last Sacrament? It is probably safe to say that in the large majority of cases, and these regardless of age and sex, the commonly expected reactions of fear varying in degree from simple nervous apprehension through the stages of worry, stark terror, hysteria and despair are the exception rather than the rule. Two notes in man's spiritual-material composition predominate, confidence or faith and its sequel relaxation. Confidence is engendered by a sense of security; and security of station results in better neuromuscular coordination so necessary to complete relaxation. There has been present up to now an inhibition in the form

of emotional tension. In the presence of such an inhibition neither spiritual nor muscular relaxation are possible. With the removal of the inhibition there is a psycho-physiologic response allowing the return to full balance of the previously existing imbalance between two opposing autonomic influences. In other words, a peaceful soul inhabits a peaceful body.

What may be said of the attitude of the physician toward Extreme Unction? Just as the doctor is likely to be the first to recognize the seriousness of an illness, he should be the first to suggest the full measure of consolation that the Church can give to his patient. This happens daily. It is interesting to note at this point that most non-Catholic physicians are very conscientious in the matter of advising the family of a Catholic patient that the "last rites" of the Church should be obtained.

The attitude of the priest in the sick room while anointing the ill is always inspiring and conducive to the sense of well-being of all. Dignified, calm, unhurried, unawed by the close proximity of death, reassuring in his every word and gesture, he figuratively "pours oil on troubled waters" when he anoints with oil the organs of the five senses. The well-modulated voice speaking softly, but distinctly, without quiver or trace of nervous tension, serves to inspire not only him who is the chief object of his attention but also those who reverently assist by their presence.

Standing quietly and unobserved and somewhat apart from the others during the ceremony the physician has the oft-repeated opportunity of closely observing the composite picture. The patient is conscious and in danger of death, the members of the family are grouped around the bed and the priest in purple stole anoints with the oil of salvation—this is the spiritual preparation for death. If there is beauty in death it can be seen only in the well-prepared; and it has its basis in the Sacrament of the dying.

Just What Is Americanism?

C. C. CHAPMAN, S.J.

AMERICANISM is not to be confused with democracy, if by democracy is meant, merely "rule by a majority." England and France are, in this sense, democracies. They are unrestricted parliamentary democracies—political democracies in which the will of the party in power is supreme. These democracies, therefore, do not fundamentally differ from the so-called dictatorships, insofar as both are governments of persons and not of law. A majority can be as tyrannical and dictatorial as a minority, or as an individual.

American democracy, on the other hand, is based upon the principle of "rule by law and not by persons"—not upon the will of men, but upon the Will of God as expressed in the laws of nature. The supreme law which ultimately controls all American affairs is found in our fundamental institutions, and in the philosophy which is behind these institutions.

The essence of that philosophy is expressed in the Declaration of Independence which, after appealing to the "laws of nature and of nature's God," says:

We hold these truths as self-evident:

That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute a new government.

From this, it is seen that the essence of Americanism is to put first things first. Man's dignity, and certain basic inalienable rights bestowed upon him by his

Creator, must have first place in our inventory. The Constitution enumerates some of these rights, among which are: the free exercise of religion, freedom of speech and press, the right of the people peaceably to assemble, the right of petition, and the right to life, liberty and property under due process of law.

Governments are set up to secure these rights and are good insofar as they contribute to this end; they are evil insofar as they become destructive of it. In other words, governments and States are made for men and not the reverse. Americanism, therefore, demands that we put the human person with his individual and family rights first, and the State with its rights, insofar as it is simply a means to an end, in a secondary place.

Next to the primacy of the Natural Law and the right order of things in importance comes the *method* by which this right order is maintained. The form of government, therefore, is of vital concern.

In the democracies of Europe, far more power is concentrated in the hands of the Central Government than in the United States. All powers necessary or convenient for the purpose of handling political affairs are assumed to be part of its natural legacy. In the United States, the case is just the reverse. No powers beyond those which are expressly or implicitly delegated to the National Government are assumed to belong to it. Our Bill of Rights declares: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited to it by the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." This principle, like the other fundamentals herein mentioned, is not merely a theoretical statement, but has been successfully applied for 150 years.

The American form of government is further distinguished from other forms by its dual character—its twofold government, State and Federal, each sovereign within its limited jurisdiction. In spite of the fact that

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the line of demarcation between the spheres of activity of State and Federal governments is not always easy to determine, the maintenance of this characteristic is essential to Americanism. The natural rights of persons are undoubtedly more secure under this system, wherein social and political experiments can be made in one or more of "forty-eight laboratories" before being tried out on a national scale.

Under the American type of democracy, the Executive and Judicial branches are on a par with the Legislative. Each is supreme within its own sphere, yet each is limited—limited, however, by definition of function, and not, as in "Authoritarian States," by mere human authority imposed from above. Each derives its powers directly or indirectly from the people; who, in turn, realize that they themselves are subject to a higher Government whose laws are manifest in the order of nature. The ultimate interpreter of these laws is our Supreme Court.

A modern British writer,¹ reflecting the trend of thought of a certain European school, speaks of the Supreme Court of the United States as enshrining in the very fabric of American democracy what he calls *the anti-political principle*. He says:

In America today no President, however powerful, can claim on the strength of a political majority, however overwhelming, the kind of absolute power which democratic politicians in Europe habitually claim. His mandate is limited to action within the framework of a written constitution of which the interpreters are not merely outside but above politics. The machinery of the Supreme Court of the United States embodies, however imperfectly, the august conception of a state with a personality demanding the service, not submitting to the rule, of politicians. It is only on such terms that democracy can survive. Fascism in America will never take hold because the Constitution itself is in essence anti-political.

The American Supreme Court stands for the principle that the rights of the majority are not absolute, but must conform

¹ Douglas Jerrold, *The Future of Freedom*, pp. 161, 162. Sheed & Ward. 1938.

to just principles, carefully determined and defined by a special procedure independent of the emotional moods of a vast electorate. Only by an acceptance of this theory and its embodiment in their own constitutional law will Christians of Europe be able permanently to reconcile democracy with freedom, or hope to establish Christ's kingdom on earth by Parliamentary methods. Unrestricted secular democracy, of the kind still theoretically practiced in Great Britain, and still actually practiced in France, is doomed.

From the foregoing description, it may appear that Americanism is merely a political philosophy based upon the Natural Law, and nothing more. It is more than that, however. It is a *way of life* which involves man's right relationship to God, to his government and to his fellow men in his social and economic activities, as well as in his political.

This much at least can be said. Americanism calls for equality of opportunity in business and professional activities and guarantees as much freedom in the exercise of these activities as is consonant with the rights of others and the general welfare of the community. A golden rule for judging acts and institutions which are in conformity with the spirit of Americanism might be stated as follows: All acts and institutions, economic and social, as well as political, are in conformity with the spirit of Americanism insofar as they operate toward the common good and do not interfere with the rights of others.

The Supreme Court is judge as to what tends toward the common good and as to the activities that interfere with the rights of others. Americanism demands that all submit to the decisions of the Supreme Court as final, even though certain decisions may later be reversed.

The American system is not fool-proof—although it is perhaps as close to fool-proof as any system ever established. If it fails, it will be because America, like all great nations of the past, shall have failed to put first things first.

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